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## What does the word of god is living and active mean

Hebrews 4:12, NIV: For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12, ESV: For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12, KJV: For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12, NASB: For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, even penetrating as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12, NLT: For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Hebrews 4:12, CSB: For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Page 2 CHOOSE YOUR BIBLE VERSION NIV ESV KJV NASB NLT CSB New International Version English Standard Version King James Version New American Standard Bible New Living Translation Christian Standard Bible Something went wrong. Wait a moment and try again. One of the great reformations in the Old Testament began by accident. Josiah, the young king of Judah, had ordered Hilkiah, the high priest, to make repairs on Jerusalem's dilapidated temple. Josiah seems to have been motivated by sincere religious devotion. He was surely bothered by how the run-down state of the building symbolized the nation's spiritual malaise. However, sprucing up the building could offer only surface improvements, but inside the temple, workers found something that promised to do much more. Hilkiah informed Josiah's secretary of noteworthy news from the construction site: "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord" (2 Kings 22:8). Although this seemed to happen by accident, there was a great providence at work. Josiah had sought to bless God by fixing the temple, and God blessed Josiah in return by placing in his hands the most powerful force in the world for reformation and revival, hope and joy, peace and salvation. The Lord had returned to Jerusalem that which had been lost, the very Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). Josiah began reading the Bible the workers had found, and soon he tore his clothes to lament what had been absent from Israel's life for so long. He gathered the godliest people around God's Word to study it. Then they put into practice the things they read in the scriptures, and the result was a renewal of the covenant with God and the restoration of the blessings that come through faith in him. What Josiah and Jerusalem learned so many years ago is something the godly have been learning ever since. It is what the Apostle Peter wrote about in 1 Peter 1:23-25. God's Living Word This view of the scriptures features prominently in Hebrews. In the long exhortation that runs through chapters three and four, the writer implores his readers to hold fast to their faith under hardship. He boldly insists that a failure to believe the message of Jesus Christ is to forfeit the great salvation that God has offered. Consistently, he backs up such statements with the authority of the Word of God from Psalm 95. Psalm 95 was written by King David about one thousand years before the writing of Hebrews. David was also interested in exhorting his readers. He did so by reflecting on the exodus generation's unbelief, which had led to their destruction some four hundred years earlier. Drawing on that example is what David wrote about in Psalm 95:7-9. It is these words that the writer of Hebrews applies to his generation. In doing so, he assumes — indeed, he boldly asserts — that the words written by David not only have relevance but also have authority over those who read them in his own time. These readers were experiencing the beginnings of persecution; perhaps they were losing their jobs or even their property because of their faith in Christ. David's words are the very Word of God, living and active even today, and in them, your destiny is bound up through either belief or unbelief. That is the point being summed up by the opening words from Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is living and active." How can this be? How can David's words, which after all are the words of a man, be living and active? The reason is seen throughout Hebrews: Because they are also the words of God. The words spoken through David and written down on paper are not first and foremost David's own words, but the Word of God. How, then, is the Bible the Word of God? That question was essential to the apostles, for they regarded the Old Testament writers as authoritative for their readers. Perhaps the best-known statement is the one Paul made in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The words of the Bible are not the inspired words of men, but the expired, out-breathed words from God's very mouth given through them. Through his Word, God himself teaches us, rebukes and corrects us, trains us in righteousness, and equips us for every good work. When you come to God's Word in faith — when you open up your heart and mind to the teachings of the Bible, either as it is preached or in your reading of it — that Word comes alive within you because it is sent by God himself for that purpose. He lives and acts in you through his living and active Word. Paul gives us a very clear description; he tells us that Scripture is God's out-breathed Word, but he doesn't tell us how this is so. Fortunately, 2 Peter 1:20-21 gives us more insight. By prophecy, Peter does not merely mean future prediction, but the whole prophetic revelation of God's teaching (2 Peter 1:21). This is why we can say that the Word of God is "living and active." We should read the Bible as God's Word to us. It is not merely relevant, but authoritative and binding on us as it was on the original readers. It is timeless and living precisely because it is the Word of the eternal and living God (2 Peter 1:19). God's Penetrating Word The writer of Hebrews has more to tell us about God's Word, continuing with explaining how it does its work (Hebrews 4:12). The image of the Word as a sword is often found in Scripture, such as in Ephesians 6:17 in Paul's description of the armor of God. In his vision of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ, John tells us, "from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword" (Revelation 1:16). This image describes God's Word penetrating or piercing power (Hebrews 4:12). The Word penetrates against all opposition to grip the whole man and not just any one aspect of his person. Furthermore, we are told what the Word does once it gets inside: "Discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). God's Word comes into us, and it discerns, assessing our attitude toward the one who sent it. But when accompanied by the Holy Spirit's regenerating work, it does more: It convicts us of our rebellion against God and subdues us; it leads us as sheep to the Good Shepherd. This is how we are born again. We hear God speaking, we read in Scripture of the perfect demands of the law as well as God's sure judgment, we realize our peril, we surrender ourselves and fall before the Lord in conviction of sin. In Scripture, we learn of a Savior who has taken our sins away by dying and rising for us, and we race forward to embrace, worship and follow him. God's All-Sufficient Word The final point we discover in Hebrews 4:12 is the sufficiency of God's Word for our every need in the things of faith and godliness. We see this in Hebrews 4:12, where a comparison is made between God's Word and worldly weapons. It is "sharper than any two-edged sword." Not only is God's Word a sword, but when compared with other weapons, it is sharper. Since God's Word is "living and active," it is effective in a way no other weapon can be. Another evidence that God's Word is sufficient for our needs is found in verse 13: "No creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." God's Word is living and active, it penetrates, and probes and nothing can escape it. Interestingly, the writer of Hebrews here compares God's Word to God's eyes. "It uncovers every heart, every act, every intention, every thought, and desire and brings them before the penetrating gaze of the living God," according to Gospel Witness. Consider the matter of Christian comfort. Do you sorrow or suffer? Are you tempted and tried? Do you want assurance of salvation and the peace that comes with it? Then turn to the Bible, which speaks of a God who is sufficient for your salvation, who is able and willing to save you and to keep you (Romans 8:32). This is what godly men and women have done throughout history; people like King Josiah recovered God's Word and restored a whole nation through it. For to his Word, God has assigned great promises (Isaiah 55:10-11). For further reading: What Is a Covenant? Bible Definition and Importance Today Does the Holy Spirit Speak Through the Bible? What Does it Mean that the Bible Is Infallible? What Is Biblical Infallibility? What Is the Purpose of the Bible? What Is the Full Armor of God? How Can I Put on the Whole Armor of God? What Is the Sword of the Spirit and How Should I Use It? Why Was Jesus Called the Good Shepherd? Photo Credit: ©iStock/Getty Images Plus/kevron2001 Dave Jenkins is happily married to Sarah Jenkins. He is a writer, editor, and speaker living in beautiful Southern Oregon.





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